Serious Advice

TO THE

SERVANTS

OF THE

Methodist Society,

IN THE

Circuit of Leeds.

By W. THOM,

PREACHER OF THE GOSPEL.

Not slothful in Business, fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord.

ROM. xii. 11.

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My dear Friends!

I have written the following Hints, by way of Advice, to render you happy in your own Minds, agreeable to the Families in which you live, and an ornament to the Goſpel of Chriſt. I hope you will read them with attention, reduce them to practice with ſincerity, and pray for a bleſſing upon them. **Luke** xii. 43. *Bleſſed is that Servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, ſhall find ſo doing.*

Serious Advice, &c.

I Shall divide the duties, which Servants owe to their Maſters, into four parts:—1. Reverence,—2. Obedience,—3. Faithfulneſs,—4. Diligence.

I. 1. Reverence in their hearts, honouring them, and fearing to give them any juſt occaſion of offence.

2. In their words, ſpeaking reſpectfully to them, and to others of them.

3. In their behaviour, carrying themſelves with due regard and reſpect towards them, remembering the power and authority they have over them,—1 Tim. vi. 1. *Let as many Servants as are under the yoke, count their own Maſters worthy of all honour, that the name of God be not blaſphemed.* 1 Pet. ii. 18. *Servants be ſubject to your own Maſters, with all fear.*—Not with a ſlaviſh, but a chriſtian fear of breaking the command of God; this fear makes a man careful not to neglect any duty that he is bound to perform, nor to offend, or provoke any perſon whom he ought to pleaſe.

II. 1. Obedience, in carefully minding and obſerving their inſtructions and counſels, eſpecially thoſe given them for the good of their ſouls,—1 Tim. vi. 2. *And they that have believing Maſters, let them not deſpiſe them, becauſe they are brethren, but rather do them ſervice, becauſe they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit.*

2. In performing their lawful and juſt commands. This is expreſsly required by the Apoſtle, Tit. ii. 9. *Exhort Servants to be obedient to their own Maſters, and to pleaſe them well in all things.* And this obedience muſt not be a grumbling and unwilling one, but ready and cheerful,—Eph. vi. 7. *With good will, doing ſervice.* And to help them herein, they are to conſider, it is to the Lord, and not only unto men, that they pay this obedience, which ſhould encourage them in it, for, *he is not forgetful of our labour of love.*—Chriſtian Servants ſhould look beyond their Maſters unto God, who has placed them in that condition, and enjoined them this obedience. Servants, therefore, muſt not diſpute their Maſter's lawful commands, but cheerfully and readily do them, and that with an eye to God's command. But, perhaps you ſay,—" I know a better way of doing things than my Maſter can tell me ;" in this caſe, you may modeſtly offer your opinion ; but if your Maſter prefer or like his own way better, you muſt not reply, but do as

as he deſires you. Matt. viii. 9. *For I am a Man under authority, having Soldiers under me, and I ſay to this Man, Go, and he goeth, and to another, Come, and he cometh, and to my Servant, Do this, and he doth it.* Let not Heathen Soldiers, obedient to their Centurion, riſe up in judgment againſt Chriſtian Servants, diſobedient to their Maſters and Miſtreſſes.

3. In patiently and meekly ſubmitting to their reproofs, when they do amiſs, not anſwering again, as the Apoſtle ſays, Tit. ii. 9. *Exhort Servants to be obedient to their own Maſters, and to pleaſe them well in all things, not anſwering again.* Here you ſee, that no rude and ill-natured reply, ſuch as may encreaſe the diſpleaſure of your Maſter or Miſtreſs, is allowed by the religion of Chriſt; and yet it is too frequent among Servants, when they are juſtly reproved. Whereas, St. Peter directs them to ſuffer patiently, even when they do well. Nor is this all, you muſt not only receive reproof patiently, but you ſhould endeavour to mend the faults for which you are reproved, and reform what has been amiſs. By this method, you will improve in the manner of doing your work, and give ſatisfaction in your preſent place; and when you think proper to leave it, a recommendation will be given with you, to your next Maſter. This will open your way into the beſt places; for good Servants are eſteemed and beloved by every decent family,

becauſe

becauſe much of their domeſtic peace and happineſs depends upon them.

III. 1. Faithfulneſs in their words, ſpeaking the truth always. Lying doubles the fault, for a lying tongue is an abomination to the Lord, Prov. vi. 17. and lyars are of the number of thoſe who ſhall be ſhut out of the New Jeruſalem, and ſhall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimſtone. Therefore, when they are charged with a fault, if they be guilty, let them remember that a humble, open confeſſion, with a promiſe of amendment, is the beſt, and moſt pleaſing excuſe that they can poſſibly make. The lie that Gehazi told his Maſter, Eliſha the Prophet, was puniſhed with a leproſy, that ſpread from Gehazi to his poſterity for ever, 2 Kings v. 22.

2. In their truſt, in not purloining, as the Apoſtle commands, Tit. ii. 10. not converting that which is their Maſter's property to their own uſe, or diſpoſing of any thing that is his, without his leave. You muſt be content with ſuch things as are allowed you, and not ſecretly take thoſe which you know are not appointed for your uſe. Where the fear of God is fixed in the heart, it will make Servants honeſt and faithful to their truſt, Gen. xxxix. 2. *And the Lord was with Joſeph, and he was a proſperous man: and he was in the houſe of his Maſter*

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the Egyptian. And his Maſter ſaw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all that he did to proſper in his hand. And Joſeph found grace in his ſight, and he left all that he had in Joſeph's hand; and he knew not ought that he had, ſave the bread that he did eat. Do not waſte your Maſter's and Miſtreſs' goods by neglect and careleſneſs. Their affairs are intruſted to your care as well as to your honeſty, and if you be careleſs, their loſs may be great.

3. In their work, endeavour to manage well every part of buſineſs intruſted to your care; and labour to preſerve and encreaſe your maſter's property, by every good and lawful means. Let uprightneſs and integrity appear in all that you do; this was the conduct of Abraham's Servant, Gen. xxiv. 12. *O Lord God of my Maſter Abraham, I pray thee ſend me good ſpeed this day, and ſhew kindneſs to my Maſter Abraham.* Here you ſee, that the Servant not only executed his Maſter's orders with fidelity, but prayed to God for a bleſſing on his endeavours.

4. You muſt be faithful in reſpect to your Maſter's Children. If any care of them be committed to you, ſtrive to infuſe good principles into them, and to ſow the ſeeds of piety and virtue in their young and tender hearts. And although you are not to take upon you to reprove and correct them, without the leave of your Maſter or Miſtreſs;

yet

yet you may, in a proper manner, and at a proper time inform them of the faults which you have obſerved in the Children. But do not make that to be a fault which is not one, but is only the ſtart of a childiſh activity, or the trifling of a playful diſpoſition.—Children are like lambs, fond of motion, running and exerciſing their limbs; but like lambs they are loving. Do not ſour their affectionate minds by needleſs reproof, and harſh behaviour, but remember, when you were Children, you thought and ſpake as Children.

5. In preſerving the reputation of your Maſter and his family, do not divulge any family ſecrets which you may know, nor carry tales of any kind out of the houſe.—Some people are very inquiſitive, and love to know the buſineſs of others; theſe will aſk you many queſtions about your place, and how you like it; and then they will endeavour to get all that they can out of you about the family, and the affairs of it. Be ſilent to ſuch, or tell them that you dare not ſin againſt God, by the ſin of tale-bearing. Remember the honourable character that Abraham's Servant gave of his Maſter,—Gen. xxiv. 34. *And he ſaid, I am Abraham's Servant. And the Lord hath bleſſed my Maſter greatly, and he is become great: and hath given him flocks and herds, and ſilver and gold, and men ſervants and maid ſervants, and camels and aſſes.*

When

When you ſpeak of your Maſter or Miſtreſs, let it be ſomething that is good.

6. In doing good to your fellow Servants. By prudent counſels, an unblameable converſation, and a good example. Strive to be a general bleſſing to the family where you live. 2 Kings v. 2. *And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive, out of the land of Iſrael, a little maid, and ſhe waited on Naaman's wife. And ſhe ſaid unto her miſtreſs, Would God my Lord were with the Prophet that is in Samaria, for he would recover him of his leproſy.* This little Servant informed her Maſter where he might get his body cured, and his mind inſtructed in the knowledge of the true God, ver. 15. *And he returned to the Man of God, he, and all his company, and he came and ſtood before him: and he ſaid, Behold, now I know, that there is no God in all the earth, but in Iſrael.*

IV. 1. Diligence; conſtantly attending to all the duties of your place, remembering that your time is not your own, but your Maſter's; therefore it muſt not be trifled away, nor mis-ſpent. When you are ſent an errand, do not ſtop to call upon your acquaintance by the way, and ſpend your time in talking; but be as quick back as you can with an anſwer, Prov. xxvi. 6. *He that ſendeth a meſſage by the hand of a fool, cutteth off the feet.* Do your work as well, and diligently

diligently behind your Maſter's or Miſtreſs' back, as when they are preſent, and looking on. Eph. vi. 6. *Not with eye-ſervice, as men pleaſers, but as the Servants of Chriſt, doing the will of God from the heart.* Let a habitual ſenſe of the preſence of God encourage you to be diligent in your work, and comfort you in all the difficulties of it, Col. iii. 24. *Knowing that of the Lord ye ſhall receive the reward of inheritance; for ye ſerve the Lord Chriſt.*

GENERAL RULES.

1. When you are going to chuſe a place, conſider where you are likely to meet with the leaſt temptation to ſin, and the greateſt opportunity of ſerving God.

2. Pray that you may be directed to that place and ſituation in life, where you can enjoy the means of grace, and glorify God in the beſt manner.

3. Learn to do your work well, be teachable, liſten to the advice of your Maſter or Miſtreſs, and profit by it.

4. Be as clean in your perſon and cloaths, as your work will admit.

5. Learn to be good mannered; remember that religion teaches us to be courteous.

By acting in this manner, you will adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, and ſhew the world, that true religion is not an empty name, but a conformity to the will of God, and a faithful obedience to all his holy commands.

The

The Servant's Hymn.

1 JESUS the Lord moſt high,
Thy pooreſt Servant own,
And give ſtrength to glorify,
And ſerve my God alone.
Inſpir'd with humble fear,
And principled with grace,
My earthly Maſter to revere,
As ſtanding in thy place.

2 Thine acceptable will,
(If thou the power impart)
In his I cheerfully fulfil,
And with a ſingle heart:
Not with eye-ſervice vain,
A flatter'd worm to pleaſe,
But God, who knows what is in men,
And all our motives ſees.

3 Whate'er for man I do,
I do as to the Lord,
From God the Merciful and True,
Expecting my reward:
And whether bond or free,
I know thou wilt approve,
And crown our ſervices to Thee
With thy eternal love.

4 O that I always may
My honoured Maſter pleaſe,
And his paternal care repay
With faithful ſervices!
My ſtudy and delight
With warm, unwearied zeal,
To do as in Jehovah's ſight,
My honoured Maſter's will.

5 If thoſe who know not God
Ther kind reprovers ſpurn,
Or ſtubborn, petulant, and loud
The anſwer prompt return;
The chidings of my Lord
Let me with awe receive,
And wounded by an haſty word,
In modeſt ſilence grieve.

6 Harden'd in ſordid ſin,
The baſeſt of the throng,
By pilfering and purloining mean
If Slaves their Maſters wrong;
My conſtant care ſhall be
My faithfulneſs t' approve,
And guard his ſacred property
Whom I revere and love.

7 Jeſus with loving fear
My ſimple heart inſpire,
So ſhall I ſerve thy Servant here
For conſcience, not for hire.
In free ſubjection live,
In every thing obey,
And all my recompence receive
At that triumphant day!

FINIS.